



Chris Danou's Capitol Report

Eager to work on Sporting Heritage Legislation

This past week several Republican lawmakers have introduced “comprehensive sporting heritage legislation” with the goal being “recruitment and retention of hunters, fishers, and trappers.” To ensure that sportsmen and women in my rural Wisconsin Assembly District have a voice, I will be meeting with Assembly Majority Leader Scott Suder (R–Abbotsford), this week to discuss these proposals. I hope to offer my own suggestions on ways to enhance the legislation and to highlight comments I have been hearing from my own constituents.

As I prepare to meet with the Republican leadership regarding this legislation, I wanted to take a moment to inform you regarding some of the ideas that will be discussed. The first proposal seeks to establish an ongoing “Sporting Recruitment and Retention Task Force,” within the DNR. The goal of the task force will be to provide recommendations to the Natural Resources Board and the Legislature concerning recruitment and retention of hunters, anglers, and trappers.

In an effort to generate more interest in Wisconsin’s sporting heritage programs, a reduced fee will be offered for hunting and trapping licenses to anyone who has not purchased one in the last ten years. The package will also require the DNR to establish adult hunter and trapper education programs that can be completed by visiting a DNR service center. High school credit for successful completion of a DNR safety program will also be offered. This proposal will provide a half credit to high school students who complete any of the DNR’s Hunter Safety Education programs. The package will also reward sportsmen and women who bring new people into the sport with a credit toward their next DNR license purchase.

There is also an effort to give priority to Stewardship purchases where all five nature based activities (hunting, fishing, trapping, cross country skiing, and hiking) will be allowed. If the DNR wants to purchase property that limits any of those activities, it would require unanimous approval of the Natural Resources Board before the purchase could be made. A free ice fishing weekend will begin the first weekend following the 1st of January – similar to summer free fishing weekend. Finally, the package allows 12 year olds to purchase a license for the sturgeon spearing season. Currently, only those 14 years of age and older can purchase a license.

Even though we do not always agree on legislative priorities, I feel that several of the aforementioned ideas brought forward by the Republicans have merit. I look forward to working across the aisle to enhance the sporting heritage package for hunters, anglers and trappers in Wisconsin. As always, I appreciate hearing from you so Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments. Through collaborative leadership, I am confident we can pass sporting heritage legislation that will have a positive impact for all of Wisconsin’s sportsmen and women.

What we really need going forward is to work together and resolve the problems most important to all the people of Wisconsin – getting the economy moving again and giving Wisconsinites a strong sense of security about their future.